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Financing issues and diverging visions for the Buffalo Creek reservoir project have held it up, but U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk on Wednesday said it's essential to flood control in the area.

"Me calling the Navy and having sailors build sandbags along River Road is becoming a yearly occurrence," Kirk said. "We need to come to a resolution, ideally with Buffalo Creek, but, if not, with Wheeling."

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District and the Lake County Forest Preserve have been negotiating to use the reservoir to mitigate flooding along the Des Plaines River. That process stopped in June after disagreements on cost and size of the project.

The 476-acre stormwater storage area is part of a bigger plan by the Army Corps of Engineers for flooding problems on the river.

Kirk sent a letter to both organizations Tuesday urging them to reach some sort of consensus on the project.

"Competition with flood control money is about to get substantially more robust given all that's happened in Illinois," he said.

Mount Prospect, Prospect Heights and Long Grove have been vocal about the need for the project because it ties in with the creation of Levee 37, which is just getting underway further down the river and is scheduled for completion in 2010. "(Buffalo Creek) is really for the water that will be displaced by the Levee 37 project," Mount Prospect Mayor Irvana Wilks said. "This would be a flood control project that would be so wonderful for everyone concerned."

Joseph Sobanski, the chief engineer for the water reclamation district, said his agency and the Lake County Forest Preserve just have different ideas for the scope of the project.

"Lake County has said from the beginning that the configuration would have to fulfill certain aesthetic goals that they had," he said. "The final design for what they wanted to see is considerably more money than the economics justify to place it there."

The project, which the reclamation district is funding, was initially projected to cost about \$36 million. With the Lake County specifications, Sobanski said the price has gone up to \$47 million.

Sobanski said the district has started talking to the Wheeling Park District about moving the project to that town. However, Tom Webber, the president of the Wheeling park board, said the discussions have just begun and no location has been chosen yet.

Wilks said she'd prefer the Buffalo Creek site because it seems to work the best for flood control; however, Sobanski said he feels the reclamation district is in line with what Kirk requested in his letter by talking to Wheeling.

"I don't feel like this has set our timeline back because we're looking at this site," he said. "I think the most important thing is that it not delay the purpose of what we were trying to achieve."